News Releases - 2007

David Jalbert, Joshua Hopkins and Frédérique Vézina win Canada Council for the Arts music prizes

Ottawa, July 17, 2007 – Pianist David Jalbert, baritone Joshua Hopkins and soprano Frédérique Vézina are this year's winners of Canada Council for the Arts prizes for young Canadian musicians.

Rimouski native David Jalbert is the winner of the 2007 Virginia Parker Prize. Worth $25,000, the prize was established in 1982 by Virginia Parker Moore. Moved by her profound love of music and the recognition that talented young musicians need such a prize to help them take a leap forward in their careers, the late Mrs. Moore established the prize for performers of classical music under age 32 who demonstrate outstanding talent and musicianship. The prize will be presented by Canada Council Director Robert Sirman in conjunction with Mr. Jalbert's performance at the Ottawa Chamber Music Festival on July 23 at the Church of St. John the Evangelist. He will be performing with violinist Jasper Wood, winner of the 2004 Virginia Parker Prize.

Joshua Hopkins of Pembroke, Ontario, is this year's winner of the $15,000 Sylva Gelber Foundation Award, established in 1981 by the late Sylva Gelber of Ottawa. Ms. Gelber had a passion for music to which she gave expression in various ways throughout her life. In the late 1970s she established the Sylva M. Gelber Music Foundation which helps young musicians to embark on a professional career. The award is given to the most talented candidate under age 30 in the Council's annual competition for Grants to Professional Musicians, classical music category.

Frédérique Vézina of Montreal is the winner of the $5,000 Bernard Diamant Prize, which offers professional Canadian classical singers under age 35 an opportunity to pursue their careers through further studies. The prize was created in 2001 with funds from a generous bequest to the Canada Council by the late Bernard Diamant, as well as through memorial gifts from a number of his friends, colleagues and former voice students. It is awarded in addition to a regular Canada Council grant to an outstanding young classical singer in the Council's annual competition for Grants to Professional Musicians, classical music category.

The three winners were selected by an independent peer assessment committee consisting of Julian Armour (Ottawa); Louise Forand-Samson (Sainte-Foy, QC); Jane Leibel (St. John's, NL); and Tim Rawlings (Calgary).

Images of the winners can be downloaded from the Canada Council image gallery. For a list of previous winners of these prizes, visit our prizes site.

2008-00427/

David Jalbert, pianist

Born in Rimouski, Québec, Pianist David Jalbert, with his personal style, incomparable stage presence and refined ear, has made himself one of the flag-bearers of the new generation. According to the *Toronto Star*: "Jalbert dazzles with skill, style and taste… with all the finesse and exuberance a listener could want."

Mr. Jalbert has won several competitions, the Canada Council's Sylva Gelber award (2002), and earned a Governor General's Gold Medal for his master's degree (Université de Montréal). His studies also took him to Toronto's Glenn Gould School and to the Juilliard School in New York. His first solo disc (works of Corigliano and Rzewski, released on Endeavour Classics in 2004) was followed up in 2006 by his acclaimed recording of Fauré's Complete Nocturnes. He also recorded twice with cellist Denise Djokic, with whom he earned a Juno nomination in 2005 for *Folklore*. Mr. Jalbert performs regularly across North America, and is currently preparing a recording of the *24 Preludes and Fugues* of Shostakovich for the ATMA label. Mr. Jalbert lives in Montreal.

Joshua Hopkins, baritone

Winner of the 2006 Borletti-Buitoni Trust Award and prize-winner at the prestigious ARD Musikwettbewerb, Joshua Hopkins has been hailed as "…a singer to watch and will doubtless achieve real heights in both song and opera, for he has brains and joy to go with his voice." Performances of the 2006-07 season bring the Canadian baritone to Opera Carolina in *I Pagliacci*, to L'Opéra de Montréal for *Don Giovanni*, and to the Santa Fe Opera for Rameau's *Platée*, to the Houston Symphony for Brahms' *Ein deutsches Requiem*, and to the Calgary Philharmonic and Edmonton Symphony for Handel's *Messiah*. This past season, his North American recital performances included New York, Vancouver, Montreal, and Florida, the latter under the auspices of the Marilyn Horne Foundation.

Appearances of the past season included *Carmen* at the Canadian Opera Company, *La Clemenza di Tito* at L'Opéra de Montréal, and *Die Zauberflöte* with Calgary Opera and the Santa Fe Opera. On the concert stage he appeared with Ensemble Arion in Quebec and Montreal, in joint recital with Barbara Bonney under the auspices of the Chamber Music Society of Lincoln Center, and at Carnegie Hall's Zankel Hall in performance with pianist Richard Goode.

Having completed his training with the Houston Grand Opera Studio in 2005, performances of past seasons with the company included *The Little Prince*, *Lysistrata*, and *Madama Butterfly*. Mr. Hopkins grew up in Pembroke, Ontario, currently lives in Houston, Texas, and travels all over North America and sometimes Europe.

Frédérique Vézina, soprano

Originally from Montreal, Soprano Frédérique Vézina currently lives in

Toronto. She has established herself both in Canada and the United States as an artist of note. Debuts with the Toronto Symphony (Vaughan Williams' *Dona Nobis Pacem*) and Washington Opera (Wellgunde in *Rheingold*) highlighted Ms. Vézina's 2005-2006 schedule. Also among her engagements were Pacific Opera Victoria's *Eugene Onegin* (Tatiana), Beethoven's *Symphony No. 9* for l'Orchestre Metropolitain with Nezet Seguin, and Mozart's *Mass in C Minor* for L'Orchestre Symphonique de Québec with Yoav Talmi.

Ms. Vézina began her 2006-2007 season as Mimi in *La Bohème* for l'Opéra de Québec. Elvira in *Don Giovanni* was on her schedule for Pacific Opera Victoria and Orchestra London and on the concert stage she appeared as soprano soloist in Mozart's *Requiem* for the Thunder Bay Symphony. In a lighter vein she was heard with Orchestra London in an evening devoted to Viennese operetta classics. Ms. Vézina performed the role of Alaïde in Bellini's *La Straniera* for Opera in Concert. Other roles include Contessa (*Le Nozze di Figaro*), Pamina in *Die Zauberflote*, Antonia (*Les Contes d'Hoffmann*) and Juliette (*Roméo et Juliette*). Ms. Vézina was heard in a broadcast recital at Chapelle historique du Bon-Pasteur and has performed in *Les Nuits d'été* and Bach's *Johannes Passion* and *Mass in B Minor*.

General information

In addition to its principal role of promoting and fostering the arts in Canada, the Canada Council for the Arts, which is celebrating its 50th anniversary in 2007, administers and awards prizes and fellowships to close to 200 artists and scholars annually in the arts, humanities, social sciences, natural sciences, health sciences and engineering. Other noteworthy prizes administered by the Council are the Canada Council Molson Prizes, the Jules Léger Prize, the Governor General's Literary Awards, the Governor General's Awards in Visual and Media Arts and the Walter Carsen Prize for Excellence in the Performing Arts.

For more information about these awards, including nomination procedures, contact Janet Riedel Pigott, Acting Director, Endowments and Prizes, at 613-566-4414 or 1-800-263-5588, ext. 5041; or Danielle Sarault, Acting Program Officer, Endowments and Prizes, at 613-566-4414 or 1-800-263-5588, ext. 4116.

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Date Modified: 2007-07-12
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